

**2015 Homeland Security Grant Application Teleconference
Question and Answer Session
Minutes**

Wednesday, August 13, 2015 – 6:00 p.m.

Contact numbers:

Pam Urban-Morin or Janice Bresnahan of the Grants Management Unit - 271-7663;
Homeland Security and Emergency Management - 271-2231

The call began at 6:02 p.m. 24 parties participated.

Pam Urban-Morin, Department of Safety, Grants Management Unit, hosted the call. Perry Plummer, Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Tom Andross from the Grafton County Sheriff's Office were also assisting from the Homeland Security Grant Committee (Grant Committee). Fallon Reed, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, assisted as moderator of the call. Janice Bresnahan, Grants Management Unit, was also on the call.

Pam stated that this call is the first of two outreach calls for the 2015 State Homeland Security Grant Program. Pam Urban-Morin advised the participants that the call was being recorded.

- The Homeland Security Grant Program has been around since 2003 when the allocation was around \$22 million dollars.
- We anticipate receiving this year's award to be effective September 1, 2015 in the amount of \$3.73 million.
- 80% goes to the eligible local first responders. The balance stays at the State level for State Homeland Security concerns as far equipment, training, and exercises
- You can go to the Department of Safety Website (<http://www.nh.gov/safety/>) and click on the 2015 Homeland Security Grants link on the left hand side, it will bring you that page. That page includes background information for reference as you are preparing an application. It also includes the application, which is created in a fillable format for the first time. We ask that you e-mail them to us by noon on September 3, 2014 at HomelandGrants@dos.nh.gov We will send a receipt as soon as we receive your application.
- In regards to the electronic application, you will need an updated version of Adobe Acrobat software. When you open the application, there is a panel to the left that contains all of the attachments that you will need to reference to complete the application. If you cannot see those attachments, it could be an indicator that you do not have the latest version.
- There are also some Frequently Asked Questions on that site that will help guide you through some pre- and post-grant award intricacies.
- The priorities are typical of NH's priorities for the last several years. We are still building capabilities for interoperability, CBRNE-related concerns, local support in the Information and Analysis Center, Med Surge and Mass Prophylaxis, Citizens Corps, MMRS, and

Critical Infrastructure Protection. The widest priority that most people fit under is CBRNE protection.

- Last year, we added certain school security type measures. Those are eligible again this year. To be eligible, you will have to have had an assessment completed by the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The measures have to have been identified in that assessment. You will need to be in partnership with the local partnership agencies (i.e. EMD, Fire, or Police).
- Perry Plummer clarified that although the schools do need an assessment done by Homeland Security and Emergency Management. If you do not have that assessment yet, and you want to complete a grant application, you can call us at Homeland Security and Emergency Management and we will do what we can to get it done on time. In addition to that, there are some schools that have had their assessment done by a contractor or have followed our guidelines. Certainly, those are acceptable but HSEM will need to review those to make sure they have the right criteria.
- The good news is that they have extended the grant timeline to complete measures to 36 months. The last two years have been only 24 months. DHS has been very stingy with extensions.

A couple of the components that go into an application include the NEPA/EHP surveys that need to be done and those can be a little bit time consuming. You can lose up to 30 days in your process completing those. You only complete this if awarded a grant.

There are new federal guidelines on grants. The "Super Circular" (2 CFR 200) is meant to be an all-encompassing grant directive that collapsed many grant requirements for many grant programs into one significant circular. One that will be noticeable is a more emphasized approach to the procurement process at the local and state level. Other concerns will be addressed in the grant award process. The grant terms and conditions as part of the application so that you can see in advance what is expected. You will be given them again as part of the grant award. We will pass those conditions through from the feds to you at the local level as we are required to do.

We are still encouraging the review of the scoring criteria which is an attachment to the application. We "teach to the test." If you check out that criteria and find that the project you have in mind may be too narrow or just not eligible, that is a good place to start rather than go through the entire application process first. The emphasis is addressing core capabilities from DHS that they want built nationally. There is a big emphasis on regional programs and opportunities and the collaboration amongst first responder disciplines to create more regional capabilities for prevention, response, and recovery.

Also, if you have any questions about your project and its eligibility, just give Pam Urban-Morin a call at 271-7663. The Homeland Security and Emergency Management Field Reps are there to help. Do not hesitate to give them a call at 271-2231. They can come out and meet with you. Post-award, the Field Reps can help with the NEPA/EHP process as well. Even with all of our help, if it is not an eligible project, there is not much latitude there. From a Grant Committee standpoint, certainly we score them based upon that scoring criteria included. Check and double-check that the criteria on the scoring sheet is met.

Perry Plummer stated that if anyone is doing a communications project, they will need to have a propagation study. If it is a large project, consider phasing the project over a couple of years to fit within the financial and time constraints of the grant. If the Grant Committee members feel it cannot be done in the timeframe of the grant, they will not score it very high because they will feel the money will be wasted. Pam Urban-Moring reminded the attendees that there are limited funds. Even when there was \$22 million available, there is only about a 1 in 5 chance of being funded. Over the years, that has maintained because of the ebb and flow in the amount of application and the changing funding amount. Historically, there is about a 20% chance of being funded. Phasing a project could make it more feasible.

Perry added that if they have a small project, it may be a better fit for the EMPG grant. Feel free to reach out the Field Rep and have that conversation right away. A good example is that if you have a \$50,000 generator for your EOC and/or primary shelter listed in your plan, those are fast tracked on the EMPG side and it might be a better fit than trying to go through the Homeland Grant Program. If it was a large generator over \$100,000, then that might be a different discussion. There are benefits within each program. Your Field Rep can help you navigate that. If it is only a few thousand dollars, I would ask that question right away before you get too far into the Homeland Grant process.

Pam Urban-Morin added that Homeland has not traditionally been the generator project program. We have done limited generators. They are typically large projects that are funding a multi-discipline or regional type dispatch center or a State identified piece of critical infrastructure. Other than that, we have not done a lot of generators. If you have questions, check in with my office or at HSEM.

Pam Urban-Morin stated Janice had pointed out and said that with supplanting, you can't have money in your budget. This can't be a planned, budgeted, or started project. We talked about the changes that DHS had made about maintaining capabilities. Bear in mind that the other component about supplanting is that money cannot already be budgeted in your local budget for a piece of equipment or a project. That is clearly supplanting. That will never change. That definition is on line as well.

Pam stated that Tom Andross is on the line. He runs the communication center for Grafton County Sheriff's Office and all the partners in that center. He is also on the Homeland Security Grant Committee. He is also a successful past grantee.

Tom Andross stated that it is crucial that applicants think about what is going in to their application and make sure that their projects are eligible and that they answer all of the questions. It sounds crazy to have to say that; however, it doesn't take many years on the Grant Committee to know that it doesn't always happen. As Pam pointed out, the answer sheet is included. If you haven't answered all of the questions, think twice about hitting send.

Perry Plummer asked if a grant application had a technical communications question relevant to the scoring, could they reach out to Tom for assistance. Tom stated that he is glad to help in general. We can't really assist in creating the application, but he is happy to answer any questions that he can.

Quick review of a couple key points for everyone:

- applications are due September 3rd at noon.
- E-mail them to: HomelandGrants@dos.nh.gov and we will reply to you to say that we have your application.
- Make sure you have some supporting documentation that helps make your case. If you have an AAR that highlights a certain capability that you need to work on, or a THIRA or SPR recommendation that fills a gap at the local level that has been identified through one of those documents, or a Communications Propagation Study of where you need to enhance communications, you will want to include those documents. We talk about that on the face page of the application about including those documents.
- Be sure to have your signatures in order. If the electronic signature is a problem- you can get real signatures, scan them and send them with the application package that you email in. Sometimes signatures take time to get through the local level. Be sure to give yourself enough time to get the right signatures.
- Fill out the whole application package. That is scored as well. Did you complete those key components? The scoring is attached. Make sure that what you are asking for is eligible within the Authorized Equipment List. If it is not an equipment project, but rather a planning project which is an eligible component of Homeland, check with the Grants Management Unit to be sure that it is eligible before you embark on that journey.

Question & Answers:

Question: Newington Fire Department - We would like a clarification on a project that we think might not be eligible. Is there someone that I can call and ask? We are looking to replace our rescue boat that we have on the Piscataqua River. It was difficult to figure out if that was a viable project or not.

Answer: Pam stated that he could call the Grants Management Unit at 271-7663. She added that boats require special permission from the USDHS to be considered. We have been able to secure that in the past for a few grantees. We can discuss this more off-line.

Question: Nashua Fire Department - We will be applying for a meter for the Souhegan Mutual Aid Response Team. Looking at some of the questions that pertain to the school equipment, would I just put "Not Applicable"? I don't like not filling out some of these out. I don't want to get demerits for not answering something that doesn't pertain to my project.

Answer: Pam responded that if a question was not applicable to his project, he would enter "Not Applicable" in the space provided. Pam added that the scoring criteria has an emphasis on regional projects because it is a program emphasis at the federal level down to the states to emphasize regionalization, sharing assets, and maintaining capabilities over building new capabilities. Nashua Fire Department stated that there is some confusion on the word "supplanting." To me, maintaining could be supplanting. Pam responded that DHS had a direction change and modification in how they are looking at the investment of these funds back in 2012.

Question: Dover Police Department – I have an appointment tomorrow with Liz, our Field Rep. When the Director mentioned EMPG in regards to smaller projects, is that open now? Is there a due date coming up soon for that? Is it an open thing?

Answer: Perry Plummer answered that EMPG has a rolling application. There are no due dates. Whenever you send it in, it will get reviewed at that time based upon priorities. It is not as competitive against each other as Homeland is. It is more competitive against our priorities and whether we have funding available at that time. It is certainly for smaller projects which means the application is much easier and much shorter. Supplanting is supplanting on all programs. There are certain items that are not eligible on either project. Liz is top notch and will be able to answer all of those questions for you.

Question: Hanover Fire Department – If I am looking at a project that basically will link two or three dispatch centers together so that we have redundancy to increase our resilience for mass warning and communication and interoperability, is there additional waiting. It fits under multiple areas under the award summary areas. Where would one get assistance to say that it really falls under Public Information and Warning vs some of the other core capabilities.

Answer: Pam answered that that would be a good question to answer off-line. We could look at the specifics of what the project is. It is sort of interoperability, but you are saying it is more like Public Information and Warning. We would talk more about the specifics and then figure out where it fits best. There is only one drop down box to choose a single capability. That is because in the past, people have literally chosen every core capability. We know that is not true so we want them to focus on one.

Question cont'd: We have done a study and we know where areas that we need to be able to rely on to back up our neighbors and our neighbors us up. Which core capability do we do that under. We will talk tomorrow.

Answer: Another thing we like to see when you have multiple agencies partnering together is current letters of support that show your partners are on board with this project. We have had projects in the past where the community named as a supporting partner in the project had no idea about it.

Questions cont'd: If we are going to partner with someone who is already attempting to plan to do something similar, who is supplanting who? If we recognize from a study that Hanover did and we see something that Lebanon is working on and they already have money towards it that we now find out that they have been identifying the same thing, who is supplanting who?

Answer: We need to talk more tomorrow about the specifics. I am familiar with some of the stuff in your area. It depends on what we are talking about here for scope of project and how it is linking to others in your area. You might not be supplanting; you may be complementing. The advantage is that I have done this since day one so I know what everyone has done for fourteen years.

The call ended at 6:44 p.m.